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15 Minute Guide

FREE

Executive Branding and Your LinkedIn Profile

How to Transform Your Executive Brand, Resume, and Career Biography Into a Winning LinkedIn Profile

By Meg Guiseppi, CEO of Executive Resume Branding, C-level/Senior-level Executive Branding & Job Search Strategist

**US News & World Report
Top Site for Finding Work
Job-Hunt.org**

**Forbes
Best of the Web for Job Hunting
Job-Hunt.org**

**PC Magazine
Best of the Internet for Careers
Job-Hunt.org**

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Why Executives Need a Branded LinkedIn Profile



You have a “brand” new executive resume and career biography that accomplish the following:

- Target the job you’re seeking,
- Immediately capture the attention of your target audience,
- Contain the relevant key words decision makers want to see,
- Brand and differentiate your unique value proposition over your competition,
- Position you as a subject matter expert and thought leader,
- Generate chemistry in you and how you make things happen, and
- Resonate with your target audience.

Don’t stop there

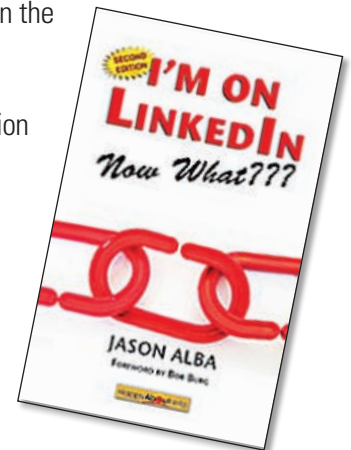
A great “paper” resume and career biography are not enough any more. You need a strong, on-brand online presence so you’ll be found by recruiters and hiring decision makers searching for candidates like you.

Start with LinkedIn. Many savvy executives competing for the jobs you want have already embraced all that LinkedIn has to offer. At the very least, you have to have a great profile there, just to keep pace with them.

According to Jason Alba, author of [“I’m on LinkedIn - Now What???”](#), in an interview on the [Executive Resume Branding Blog](#):

“If you do NOTHING else, you need to have a LinkedIn Profile and strategy. Your competition (probably younger) is participating in social environments like LinkedIn, and many recruiters depend on LinkedIn to find talent. If you aren’t there, you aren’t being found, but your competition is.

Also, doesn’t it make sense to understand the current landscape? Not having a LinkedIn profile or strategy kind of tells me you don’t really care about the current landscape . . . so what other current things are you going to be behind on?”



Extend the value of your branded executive resume and career bio.

Merely throwing together your LinkedIn profile without strategizing its impact on your target audience will probably make it ineffectual or may even be a detriment to you. Your profile needs to accomplish the same things your resume and bio do, and also be searchable.

With a little editing and juggling, everything in your branded executive resume, and some of your career bio, can be used in appropriate sections of your LinkedIn profile. If you need help understanding personal branding and branding your resume before tackling your LinkedIn profile, see:

[What Is Personal Branding?](#)

[10 Steps to Uncovering and Building Your Authentic Personal Brand](#)

[Best of Executive Resume Branding Tactics and Advice](#)

Building Your Branded LinkedIn Profile (working down from the top)

Professional Headline (directly below your name)

Pump it up with the relevant key words your target audience will be looking for. You can pack quite a punch with the 120 characters allowed.

Which of the following headlines, for the same executive, do you think will make her profile more searchable and compelling, and capture attention better?

CEO - [Current Company]

OR

CEO - Global Operations Change Agent | Entrepreneurial Startups | Crisis, Recovery & Turnaround Management

Remember that your professional headline follows you everywhere on LinkedIn once you get active, in a mini pop-up giving viewers a brief snapshot of your profile – when you post a Question or Answer, participate in Group activities, invite people to join your network, etc.

Meg Guiseppi,

Master Resume Writer [Edit]

C-level/Senior-level Executive Branding & Job Search - Elite Resume & Career Biography Writing, Online Identity-Building

Greater New York City Area | Writing and Editing [Edit]



[Edit]

Meg Guiseppi, Master Resume Writer is building referral relationships with select c-level/senior-level executive recruiters. 5 days ago. [Edit]

Photo

Choose your LinkedIn photo wisely. This is the first thing people are likely to see when they open your LinkedIn profile. Choose an appealing photo that strikes the right image and professional tone for your industry and niche. For consistency, use the same photo everywhere else online.

Discussions persist over whether including your photo can cause people to discriminate against you. You may have good reason not to include a photo, but I encourage you to include one. Branding is about creating emotional connections. People believe content more when it's accompanied by the author's photo.

What Are You Working On?

Update this powerful feature frequently to keep your LinkedIn network and those viewing your profile current with your latest activities. LinkedIn notifies your network whenever you refresh this or any other part of your profile, which keeps you and your brand value top of mind with them.

Include a link to more about the update, if applicable.

You'll need to shorten the URL using a site like

tinyurl.com, budurl.com, etc. This area also represents another opportunity to brand your profile with relevant key words.

Suggested "What Are You Working On?" updates:

- **An online article, blog post, or white paper you've published**
- **An event or seminar you're presenting**
- **A new project you're working on**
- **A significant accomplishment or contribution to your company**
- **Activities with your networks or LinkedIn Group**
- **An important seminar or event you'll be attending or have attended**

Recommendations

Keep building up brand and value-reinforcing recommendations within each job you've held. Nothing speaks to your unique value proposition better than what others who know your work best have to say about you. If they're amenable, it's okay to help them write a brief paragraph or two by providing them a little information about the kinds of positions you're seeking, so that they can align what they write with what hiring decision makers will be looking for. Let them know which attributes, skills, and achievements you'd like them to highlight.

Connections

Opinions differ on whether it's more important to amass a lot of connections or concentrate on building quality connections. That's up to you, but doesn't it make sense to surround yourself with people you actually know (at least somewhat) and with whom you can build mutually helpful relationships?

Websites

Include links to up to 3 web pages associated with you and your brand. If you don't have a blog or website, this is a great place to put a link to your VisualCV, online career portfolio, any notable press about you, a white paper you published online, etc. You may want to link people to "Follow [your name] on Twitter". Lead people to more brand-reinforcing information about you.

Tip: Optimize your profile by associating the link with what's actually on the web page. When naming your websites or web pages, use searchable and relevant terms. Instead of "My Blog" or "My Website", use the actual name of the blog or website if it's key word rich, or something like "My Blog on Turnaround Management".

Your Public Profile URL (immediately above the “summary” section)

The default URL ends in an indistinct jumble of letters and numbers. Maximize your profile’s searchability by personalizing it with your name. This is what my LinkedIn URL looks like:

www.linkedin.com/in/megguiseppi

If you have a common name or one that’s already taken, you’ll have to play around with this. Include your middle initial, or just use your first initial, or first and middle initials.

Summary

Working from a text version of your resume, you can copy and paste blocks of information into this and the following appropriate sections of your profile. A short value-driven statement or two from your bio may also work here.

- Lead the summary just as you did with your branded resume – a hard-hitting profile, possibly with a tagline, and your executive or leadership brand statement.

Which of these summary lead-ins for the same executive captures attention better, generates chemistry, and indicates his promise of value?

Business Development and Operations Management

Experienced in new business development, technology solutions, acquisitions and divestitures, and customer service improvement.

OR

C-level Global Business Development and Operations Management Best-of-Breed Technology Solutions ... Major Acquisitions & Divestitures Exceptional financial acumen with vast P&L experience

Turnaround expert inventing “think big” strategies that shape the market. Stimulate declining business in shrinking markets and deliver double-digit revenue growth with up to 3X margin growth. Re-engage lost customers, capture international growth opportunities, increase partnerships, optimize thought leadership, revitalize brand positioning and market presence, and unify all stakeholders.

- Break up dense chunks of information into shorter, brand-focused statements of value, surrounded by plenty of white space so that they clearly stand out. This also keeps drawing the reader's eye down, so they're more likely to read your entire profile.
- If your resume profile has sub-headings such as Pivotal Strengths or Critical Contributions, set them up similarly in the summary section of your LinkedIn profile. You may want to put the sub-headers in cap letters.
- Load the Specialties section with relevant key word phrases that represent your key functional areas of expertise. Try listing them in a column for better impact.

Formatting Tip
LinkedIn may not accept some graphic bullet points that you used in your resume, but you can get visual impact with various characters right on your keyboard, such as:

* ~ > = - <>

Experience and Education

Plug in appropriate information from your resume for both sections. Lead your achievement statements with the WOW result first and surround each with white space for better visual impact. Make your profile even more searchable by adding the names of your customer companies in the experience section. Some experts suggest that you include your employment history all the way back to the beginning, even if it isn't on your resume and may indicate your age. The thinking is that people searching those older company names will find you.

Additional Information (at the bottom of your profile)

Include select information from your career bio. Highlight your commitment to community and interesting hobbies or pastimes.

Of course, list all awards and honors you've earned. Include academic honors and recognition, company recognition awards, nominations for professional or civic awards, and your inclusion in well-known industry directories.

List affiliations with relevant professional organizations. Include any leadership contributions you've made. Again, people will find you when they search the names of these organizations.

As you join LinkedIn Groups, these will be listed, along with each Group's logo.

Tell a story in the "Additional Information" section.

Talk about your passions. The companies you're targeting are interested in your whole brand picture. Chemistry and good fit are very important to them these days. Slices of your personal pursuits can help decision makers identify with you and give them an idea of what kind of person you are and whether you'll fit their corporate culture.

Applications

Once your branded profile is all together, enrich it with LinkedIn's applications – slide share presentations, Google presentations, blog link, reading list, "My Travel", polls, etc.

Additional LinkedIn Profile Branding Tips

Typos and poor grammar can discredit you.

Meticulously check spelling and grammar. Have a few other people proofread and edit for you.

Pay special attention to all that lands “above the fold” in your profile.

Whatever is on the screen when people open your profile is obviously the first thing they’ll see, and can make or break your chances to be considered. Take advantage of what you can do here to immediately capture attention and promote your personal brand and value proposition to employers.

Make them want to scroll down to read your entire profile. Just as with your resume, it’s wise to move up to above the fold those pivotal achievements and contributions that would otherwise be buried in the Professional Experience section, further down in your profile.

Sprinkle a few select key words and phrases relevant to your target and niche throughout your profile.

You’ll rank higher for these terms when people conduct a LinkedIn people search. If you land within the first few results, they’re much more likely to click through to your profile.

For instance, if you’re all about “Turnaround Management”, make sure the phrase appears in your professional headline, summary section, and a few times in the professional section. But resist over-packing your profile with the same relevant key words. Remember that human eyeballs are reviewing your profile, too. Make it a compelling and interesting read.

Your profile isn’t complete until it’s 100% complete.

When you’re working in “Edit My Profile” mode, look to the top right to see the scale showing “profile completeness” – 80% ... 90% ... 100%. Although people viewing your profile will not see this percentage number, LinkedIn suggests that when your profile is 100% complete, your chances of rising toward the top of LinkedIn searches greatly improves.

Here’s what you need to be 100%:

- A current position
- Two past positions
- Education
- Profile summary
- A profile photo
- Specialties
- At least three recommendations



Choose your privacy settings.

Go to the “Account & Settings” tab at the very top right of your profile and be sure your profile is as open as you want it to be – especially that your “Public Profile” is set to display full profile information, so that it’s accessible to search engines.

Save a copy of your profile.

LinkedIn has a feature to let you easily convert your profile to a PDF file so you can save a copy. In “Edit My Profile” mode, look to the top right, just above the “profile completeness” scale and you’ll see the PDF icon. Just click on it and save a copy.

Lead people to your LinkedIn profile.

Include a link to your LinkedIn profile on your resume, along with your contact information at the top. Include the nifty LinkedIn badge in your email signature, on your VisualCV, on your website/blog, and elsewhere.

Your branded LinkedIn profile and beyond.

When you’re all set with a branded LinkedIn profile that will turn heads, get busy leveraging all that LinkedIn has to offer. See [My Best of LinkedIn Tips and Resources](#).

Remember that LinkedIn notifies your network whenever you make changes to your profile.

Regularly refresh “What are you working on?” and other parts of your profile to stay top of mind with your connections. Change your professional headline to reflect your current job search focus and target audience.

About the Author: Meg Guiseppi



A C-level/Senior-level Executive Branding & Job Search Strategist and CEO of Executive Resume Branding, **Meg Guiseppi** loves collaborating with forward-focused corporate leaders to differentiate their unique value proposition, demystify today's world of executive job search, and strategically position them for success. A 20-year careers industry veteran, Meg has earned multiple certifications – Reach Certified Personal Branding Strategist, Master Resume Writer, Certified VisualCV Creator, and Certified Professional Resume Writer.

About Executive Resume Branding

Meg works one-on-one with clients to define their personal brand, craft interview-generating documents – elite resumes, career biographies, cover letters, and collateral documents. She transforms these career marketing tools into a strong online footprint with LinkedIn, Twitter and other social networking profile creation, [VisualCV creation](#), and other online identity-building strategies.

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About Job-Hunt

Job-Hunt.org is a free “employment portal” Website which links to over 13,000 employers and job search and career resources. Advice from various job search experts is also provided, from protecting your privacy to using Craigslist, LinkedIn, and Twitter in your job search.

Meg Guiseppi is Job-Hunt's “Personal Branding Expert” offering advice every month to help job seekers succeed in their job search.

Assisting job seekers since 1995, Job-Hunt has won much recognition for the quality of the content, and our goal is to continue to deserve that recognition.

- *US News & World Report* Top Site for Finding Work
- *Forbes* Best of the Web for Job Hunting
- *PC Magazine* Best of the Internet for Careers

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